

Winter 05

**RTF 584 Seminar: Bourdieu**

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French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu had a very productive and wide ranging career. This seminar will examine his work in four areas of media analysis: a) *Distinction*, his analysis of the social nature of taste and consumption; b) his critique of Kantian aesthetics, the dominant theoretical basis of art analysis for the past 200 years; c) the concept of the Field of Art, or how art operates as a social institution, and d) the critique of neoliberalism and global capitalism.

While the course will center on working with Bourdieu's ideas as they apply to media culture, students from other visual arts, literature, theatre and drama, performance, philosophy, sociology, etc. can develop their research papers in terms of their special interests.

Along the way, we will consider how a student can understand a major thinker whose work is rich and diverse, particularly one whose career is grounded in a specific culture and society, how to disentangle the core ideas from the immediate and specific context of post WW2 France, and how to productively apply those ideas to different national contexts.

The course will begin with common core readings and how they can be applied to media culture. In addition to discussion, students will prepare short reports on other writings by Bourdieu and commentators on Bourdieu. Students will also prepare original research, with a first draft due the seventh week of class. That draft will be discussed and critiqued in class and rewritten as a final paper by the end of the course.

**Required books** (Norris Center store):

Bourdieu, *Distinction* : a social critique of the judgment of taste (Harvard UP, 26.95)

Bourdieu, *The field of cultural production* : essays on art and literature (Columbia UP, 23.50)

Bourdieu, *The rules of art* : genesis and structure of the literary field (Stanford UP, 17.13)

Bourdieu, *On television* (New Press) 10.36

Bourdieu, *Firing back: against the tyranny of the market* (New Press, 11.16)

Bourdieu, *Acts of resistance: against the tyranny of the market* (New Press, 10.36)

Jeremy F. Lane, *Pierre Bourdieu* : a critical introduction, (Pluto Press;18.95)

**SCHEDULE**

**Monday Jan 3**  
introduction

**Monday Jan 10**

- Distinction, 1
- Read: Distinction, xi-256
  - o Lane, 1-113
- Discussion: Distinction

**Monday Jan 17** MLK holiday--meet 9-11

- The critique of Kant
  - o Read: Kant, Critique of Judgment (excerpt; handout)
- Distinction, 485-500
- Lane, 114-201
- Discussion, Kant and Aesthetics (one hour)
- Screening (in class): Godard & Miéville, Six fois deux (6 X 2), excerpt
- Discussion, The amateur as artist (one hour)

**week of Jan 17** time and place TBA--

- Screening: Sociology as a Martial Art (2 hours--Media Center, UL)

**Monday Jan 24**

- Distinction, 2
- Read: Distinction, 257-484

**Mon Jan 31**

- The Field of Cultural Production
- Read (primary): preface, editor's intro vii-25; "The Field of Cultural Production" 29-73; "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception" 215-237.
  - o Read: (secondary) "the Production of Belief..." and "The Market of Symbolic Goods"
- TBA

**Mon Feb 7**

- The Rules of Art
  - o Read: preface xiii-xx; "Three States of the Field" 47-175; "The Historical Genesis of the Pure Aesthetic" 285-312; "The Social Genesis of the Eye" 313-321.
- TBA

**Mon Feb 14**

- Submit and discuss paper outline
- Kleinhans, "Producing the field of avant garde film" (in progress)

**Mon Feb 21**

- Rough first draft due Feb 24
  - o Bourdieu, writings on neo-liberalism (Acts of Resistance; Firing Back)
- Bourdieu, On Television

**Mon Feb 28**

- The field of Bourdieu studies/criticism
- Developing a critique, a strategy for use

**Mon Mar 7**

- Presentation of final papers

**Mon Mar 14** (exam week)

- Presentation of final papers

The following books have been placed on two hour reserve in the University library.

Bourdieu, Pierre. Distinction : a social critique of the judgment of taste  
Bourdieu, The field of cultural production : essays on art and literature  
Bourdieu, The rules of art : genesis and structure of the literary  
Bourdieu, Photography  
Bourdieu, Masculine domination

Fowler, Bridget. ed. Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture  
Fowler, Bridget. Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory  
Lane, Jeremy F. Pierre Bourdieu : a critical introduction  
Moi, Toril, What is a woman? and other essays  
Robbins, Derek. Bourdieu and culture  
Robbins, Derek, ed. Pierre Bourdieu (4 volumes)  
Web, Jen et al. Understanding Bourdieu